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THE UNITARIAN

A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

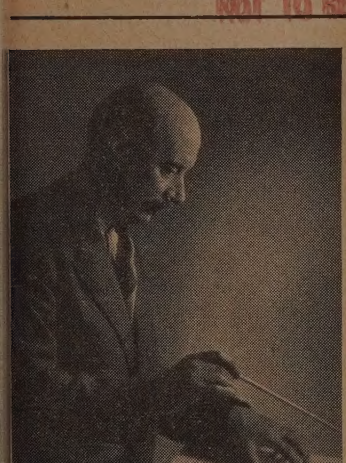


Photo by Roy Hudson, Eastbourne.

THESE ARE UNITARIANS

3. Sir Adrian Boult

By John Rowland

Adrian Cedric Boult was born at Chester in 1889; his father was Mr. Cedric R. Boult, J.P., who had been a Liverpool man for most of his life, though Chester was his home in his later years. Sir Adrian, as he was later to become, was therefore a son of the north, though he was to spend most of his life (when not touring all over the world as a celebrated orchestral conductor) in the south.

He was educated at Westminster School, Christ Church, Oxford, and, for the musical side of his education, at Leipzig.

He returned to England in 1913, a practised conductor with a great admiration for some of the modern composers, such as Elgar and Vaughan Williams, and the following year he was conducting at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where his interpretations soon attracted considerable attention. After the end of the First World War, Dr. Boult, as he then was, was appointed conductor of the City of Birmingham Orchestra, one of the finest of the orchestras of the British provincial cities; here he was able to utilise to the full his flair for getting the best out of his orchestral players, and he gave Birmingham some of the clearest interpretations of the great orchestral works, both classical and modern, that it has ever had. In 1930 he was appointed principal conductor to the B.B.C., and continued with the Corporation until 1942, when he resigned, to become conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

All through his long and satisfying career, Sir Adrian has secured the friendship and even affection of the players who have performed under his direction. The great classical concertos, played by most of the leading soloists of the day, have been noteworthy as interpreted under his direction. He has, however, always, with typical modesty, regarded the concerto as much more a matter for the soloist than for the conductor, and has usually insisted on the soloist occupying the limelight on these occasions, with the conductor keeping well in the background.

A lifelong Unitarian, Sir Adrian

has been associated with various churches at different periods in his career; he has been kind in giving of his time to talk about music to the congregations and friends of many churches. But the most noteworthy occasion of his life in which a Unitarian church featured was his marriage. He was already a famous musician, and did not wish to have a huge crowd at his wedding; he therefore decided that this should take place in the delightful surroundings of the Old Meeting House at Ditchling, in the South Downs. An old friend of Sir Adrian's, Scott Goddard, the well-known musical critic, was a resident in the village of Ditchling, and when the wedding was arranged, Mr. Goddard stripped his garden, and the gardens of some of his friends, with the result that the beautiful Old Meeting House was full of flowers. There were many noteworthy musical figures present; the little harmonium, which was then the only instrument available there, was played by Sir Walford Davies, Master of the King's Music, and some of those who were present spoke feelingly of the loving way in which Sir Walford played the instrument—probably, as Sir Adrian has since been apt to remark, the only occasion in his public life as a musician, in which Sir Walford has had to supply the wind-power by pedalling!

It was, perhaps, appropriate that Sir Adrian should have returned to Ditchling, years afterwards, to give a crowded audience a fascinating evening of musical discussion.

Unitarianism has sometimes been accused of being over-intellectual, without sufficient emphasis on the emotional values and the values of the arts. But the fact that such a great musician as Sir Adrian Boult has found in the Unitarian faith part of his artistic inspiration is sufficient disproof of this theory. He is a figure of whom we may well be proud.

THE WORLD IS A BRIDGE

By A. B. Downing

A little book by a German scholar has recently appeared entitled "Unknown Sayings of Jesus." One is preserved in a very unusual place: on the gateway of a mosque, now in ruins, built by Akhbar the Great Mogul (1542-1602) south of Delhi. It runs:

> Jesus, on whom be peace, has said:
> This world is a bridge.
> Pass over it. But build not your dwelling there.

Can this be a genuine saying of Jesus, who obviously said much more than is preserved in our Gospels? It may well have been taken to the court of Akhbar by Jesuit missionaries, who were there in 1579. The metaphor of the bridge is rather unusual for such a dry country as Palestine, but it is not impossible that Jesus used it. That such a saying is attributed to Jesus, and by Mohammedans, is a striking testimony to his spiritual influence.

"The world is a bridge," not an end in itself. To probe that world, to travel to the moon or to explore the sun, to make the outward world the end of everything with all that that implies, is not the real purpose of life for the true Christian. The world itself is not the final consideration; it is a bridge to a spiritual order of reality. We miss the true purpose of life if we ignore where the bridge is leading us.

We often forget that this world is only a bridge, and behave as though our anxieties, our successes and our sufferings were the only reality there is. Jesus was always reminding his hearers of what he called the Kingdom of God, another name for the spiritual realities of existence. It is not enough to probe the secrets of the atom, but ultimately more important to consider

such things as the mystery of goodness. For life to mean as much as our highest thoughts and deepest experiences suggest, we have to reckon with the reality of God. "This world is a bridge. Pass over it. But build not your dwelling there."

ENCOURAGING EXPERIMENTS

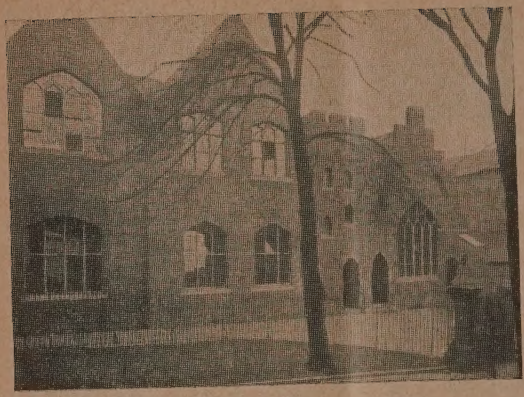
The family spirit

Two Christmas-time occasions are worth reporting from Unitarian Churches. One has become an annual pre-Christmas event at Horsham, Sussex, a Dickens' Dinner, this year served to 80 guests in a candle-lit hall with those waiting at table, and guests as far as possible in appropriate Dickensian costume. The minister (the Rev. Martin Hall) acted the host as Charles Dickens, and called upon the guests to heed the grace spoken by David Copperfield (Kate Hall, aged nine). The dinner was of five courses, each contributed through the generosity of many donors, with items including soup, smoked salmon hors d'oevres, chicken and salad, cream trifle, ice cream. (is this Dickensian?). coffee, cheese and biscuits and dessert. From the proceeds of this event £10 were sent to the Channing School Fund for rebuilding its bombed wing, and another £10 went to church funds.

The other event was a Christmas morning congregational breakfast arranged by the minister of Kendal Chapel, Mr. Tom Wardle and his congregation. Many Unitarians, however regular they may be at Sunday worship, fail to turn out on Christmas morning. The reason often given is that Christmas is a home festival. So it is, and Charles Dickens helped to establish it as such, but its character as a home festival need not preclude its observance as a Church festival. It is a family festival, and no family lives to itself—especially at Christmas. Christmas is the time for reunions and family unions, and a Church, certainly a Christian Church should seek to express its family spirit at Christmas-time, for the Church must be a wider family.

So the Kendal members borrowed a calor-gas cooker, and by 8 a.m. on Christmas Day five young people were busy in the school kitchen preparing a breakfast of melon, sausages, bacon, eggs, bread and butter and coffee. At nine o'clock the members were arriving, Unitarians not only from Kendal, but from Grange-over-Sands, Ambleside and Windermere. A radiogram played carols and everyone joined in singing them. Breakfast was served to young and old, and many helped with the washing up which was all finished in time for a 10.15 service, during which the children were left to play with their toys in care of a responsible person. After the family service at which the Christmas spirit was so feelingly expressed, there was plenty of the day left for the "home" celebrations, and an experiment, whose suggestion had at first been considered somewhat crazy, was found to be a triumphant success.

"When you say 'My friends,' isn't that what they call 'begging the question'?"



UNITARIAN SCHOOLS

New Meeting, Kidderminster

By E. W. Hill, M.A.

A Charity School commenced in High Street, Kidderminster, in Michaelmas, 1758, established and maintained by the town's Protestant Dissenting congregation. Connected with this congregation was a family named Pearsall. Mr. Nicholas Pearsall senior was the school's first treasurer. Another Mr. Pearsall was a later treasurer.

In 1771 the Protestant Dissenting congregation divided into the Old Meeting (the present Baxter Congregational Church), and the New Meeting (the present Unitarian Church), and the High Street Charity School was divided between the two congregations. So we have one of the New Meeting Schools coming into existence, namely the New Meeting Charity School. The name indissolubly connected with it is that of Nicholas Pearsall, another member of the family mentioned above. He was the virtual founder of the New Meeting congregation and established its Sunday School. In 1786 he provided the Charity School with a site and erected premises for it at his own expense, but did not endow it as it was to be supported by the contributions of the New Meeting Society.

Nine years later, in 1795, he built a second school on an adjacent site, again at his own expense, providing it with a liberal endowment. The Charity School was "for the education of poor boys and girls in reading, writing and accounts," as an obituary notice of Pearsall states. This second school, according to the same source, was "for grammar learning," and came to be known as Pearsall's Grammar School. We are further informed that "Part of his design in erecting and endowing this latter (the Grammar School) was to provide a seminary for young men intended for the ministry, preparatory to their entering upon an academical course."

In 1865 the original buildings of the two schools were pulled down and replaced by new ones. The Grammar School closed down in 1877 so providing the Charity School with much needed extra accommodation. In 1883 the premises

were further enlarged and became much what they are to-day.

Though the Grammar School itself closed down in 1877, the endowment was used to provide New Meeting Elementary School boys with Pearsall Scholarships at the King Charles I Grammar School, Kidderminster. Pearsall scholars continued to be sent from New Meeting to King Charles until the latter school, consequent upon the 1944 Education Act ceased to charge fees. To-day this endowment income is being used to purchase books for the use of children of the New Meeting Sunday and Day Schools. During its existence Pearsall's Grammar School had among its pupils many boys bearing names of families still highly regarded in the town. The founder's desire that it should "provide a seminary for young men intended for the ministry" also was realised to some little extent, for a number of boys either actual pupils at the school or Pearsall scholars at King Charles, did become Unitarian ministers. Amongst these (all now deceased) were Dr. Lant Carpenter, a near relative of Nicholas Pearsall and grandfather of Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter (whom many still remember with the utmost affection), C. D. Badland (whose sisters, Jane and Caroline, died recently, aged respectively 105 and 102 years), Edward A. Parry, G. A. Payne, and H. E. Haycock.

After the 1870 Education Act, when School Boards were set up, the New Meeting congregation handed its elementary school over to the Kidderminster School Board, being of the opinion that this was the right thing to do now that there was a National System of Elementary Education. The school became a board school on August 31st, 1877. But on August 31st, 1880, it "was taken back by the congregation, a certain amount of friction having arisen with regard to the use of the school buildings in the evenings for congregational purposes, the congregation apparently having found it difficult to secure the use of their own buildings when they required them"—so wrote the late Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans in: *A History of the New Meeting House.*

The school, once more a voluntary school, now came to be regarded as a Higher Grade School and charged a small weekly fee. After the passing of the Education Act of 1902, it became a non-provided school and began to receive rate aid in addition to the government grant. After the Education Act of 1944, it was accepted as a controlled school which means that the congregation is no longer responsible even for the maintenance of the buildings. All it does to-day is to provide the buildings rent free.

There is to-day no infants' department and when the children reach the age of 11 they are transferred to a secondary school. However, the school still caters for approximately 200 boys and girls and has a high reputation in the town. Moreover, the connection with the New Meeting congregation is by no means severed. True, no longer do the bulk of its boys and girls belong to the New Meeting Sunday School, nor does the New Meeting congregation to-day have its Day School Anniversary in addition to its Sunday School Anniversary. But the congregation is still represented on the school's committee of management, the Minister acting as chairman, and on special occasions the school uses the church, for example, for its service of carols before Christmas, which is conducted by the Minister.

So the school continues to play its part and is a reminder of the pioneer work put in by Unitarians and other religious people in the endeavour to establish a national system of education.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

It was a very dark night. Heavy clouds moved across the sky and the moon. The wind whistled playfully around Sammy, who was guarding the Town Hall. At that late hour, however, Sammy was not in a playful mood. Midnight came, the wind eased a little; but clouds still covered the moon and—was that a sound? Footsteps! He was right. They were approaching the corner! He stiffened, held his rifle at the ready, tried to stop his teeth chattering—and waited. The footsteps came nearer and a man turned the corner. Sammy roared:

"Halt! Who goes there? Friend or foe? The man leaped a foot in the air and, upon landing, stood as if rooted.

"Er—f r i e n d," he stuttered. Sammy approached, flashed his torch and saw—the Mayor's valet!

"What are *you* doing out?" asked Sammy.

The valet's expression became fierce. "I'm leaving," he replied. "I've put up with the Mayor long enough. He's led me a dog's life." He wiped away a tear.

Sammy was sympathetic. "Don't be too harsh. He's all right, really. Dog's life or not, *his* bark is worse than his bite. He doesn't mean it."

"Well, I'm fed up with it," said the valet, heatedly. "He's shouted at me for the last time. I wouldn't go back if he knelt before me and begged."

A window above suddenly crashed open, a head popped out and a voice yelled: "What's all the noise down there, eh?! Sammy, what are you —" A slight pause, then—"**You**!! What on earth d'you think *you're* doing?"

The poor valet was tongue-tied, so Sammy said: "Please, your Worship, he came down for a breath of air."

"Breath of air?" exploded the Mayor, "Don't be silly! Don't be—Come up here at once before I catch my death of cold."

The valet quailed. "Er—yes, your worship," he said; and went back!

Sammy returned to his beat and recited to the night wind:

"O March, it is a wild month;
A fact we cannot doubt.
But March is even wilder
When His Worship is about!"

NEWS AND VIEWS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The winter meeting of the Council this year takes place in February instead of January, too late for report in this issue. The Assembly Meetings will be in London from April 15th to 18th. The Assembly preacher will be the Rev. W. J. Carter, M.A., of Newport, Isle of Wight, a minister who has often left his mark on denominational conferences, in spite of the handicap of lifelong blindness. The Rt. Hon. J. Chuter Ede will be installed as President.

OVERSEAS

AUSTRALIA SHADY GROVE church in the Bush near Adelaide has held its 92nd Anniversary. ADELAIDE members recently welcomed Miss Doerr, of Longreach, California, on a passing visit, and took her to see Shady Grove. Unitarian women at Adelaide have been acting as hostesses at the State-sponsored Immigration Hostel, providing supper.

CANADA. VANCOUVER church held its third welcome service for new members in 1957, and gave a welcome to 45 new members. During 1957 the Vaucouver branch of the Unitarian Service Committee shipped 9,509 lbs. of new and used clothing for Korea. Sorting and packing for this service is taking place continually.

GREAT BRITAIN

CULLOMPTON raised the record sum of £120 at its Christmas Fair towards the Manse repair fund, of which £370 out of £400 required has now been raised.

DUDLEY. The St. John Ambulance Cadets paraded for morning service on January 19th.

GLOUCESTER. Thanks to the Winter Sale, the cost of the new organ-blower, £80, has nearly been covered.

LEIGH, Lancs. The sum of £277 was raised at the Bazaar, a notable result. The Y.P.L. is holding an experimental Social Hour after Sunday evening services.

LIVERPOOL. GATEACRE Christmas Fair realised nearly £134. A Unitarian Group has met at HUYTON, when the Rev. S. R. Butler introduced a discussion on "Our Faith." The SPEKE congregation visited Gateacre for the Toy Service and Nativity Play at Christmas. SPEKE has set out to raise £1,000 for the building fund of the projected church. SPEKE and MILL STREET MISSION held a joint Sunday School Christmas party.

LONDON. WANDSWORTH church has been faced with the task of raising £400 for repairs to its fine organ, and a good deal more than half has now been raised.

MANCHESTER. BLACKLEY Men's Forum recently welcomed Mr. Amundsen, of Oaklands, California, to speak on America. Mr. Amundsen is spending a year in England with his family, to study British Trade Unionism, and has spoken to other Unitarian groups. His family is attending ALTRINCHAM church. Altrincham Sunday School's New Year Party was the most successful for many years.

U.Y.P.L. A Scottish region, representing branches in all four of our Scottish Unitarian Churches has been formed. New branches affiliated to U.Y.P.L. include Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Todmorden. South Lancashire Region has held an interesting Rally at the Ancoats University Settlement, where many opportunities for giving practical service were discovered. This was a suitable follow-up to the "Old People's Homes" Rally in the autumn.

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The Story and Significance of the Unitarian Movement

by W. G. Tarrant, B.A.

Reprinted with additional notes

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The Lindsey Press, 15, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

National Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Lay Preachers

Preliminary Notice

AN EASTER SCHOOL

will be held from Thursday, 3rd April to Tuesday, 8th April, at the Unitarian College, Manchester

Please Note: The School will be extended until Easter Tuesday this year for those wishing to stay

Programme from P. J. Spencer, 114, Beeches Road, West Bromwich, Staffs.

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Dr. and Mrs. Bramsted, of Sydney, are on a year's leave to Oxford to do lecture and seminar work.

The Rev. David W. Edmunds, B.A., B.D., recently appeared on TV in the New Zealand "Give us this day" feature.

Ruth Beazley, of Hornsby, N.Z., distinguished herself in Sydney sports, and was second for all New South Wales in the 50 yards sprint.

Mrs. Cox, Richmond's nonagenarian organist, recently underwent an operation for cataract.

The Rev. T. W. Roberts, of Pendleton, has been elected Vice-Chairman of Salford Clergy and Ministers' Fraternal.

The Rev. John Rowland, of Brighton, has relinquished his oversight of Ditchling.

The Rev. S. R. Butler, of Gateacre and Speke, has resigned the charge of St. Helens.

Mr. R. Harkness, of Newtownards, was awarded the M.B.E. for public services in Northern Ireland.

SIDMOUTH. The Women's League recently raised £36 for the local Hospital building fund at a Coffee Morning.

CREWKERNE. Over £12 was raised at an autumn Jumble Sale. Special services have been very well attended.

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